



Larry Fenster
Senior Economist
Law and Public Policy
1133 19th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-736-6513

April 16, 2005

Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12 St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: MCI's 2005 Report on the Status of Waived IP-Relay and Video Relay Services

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Please find attached MCI's 2005 Report on the Status of Waived IP-Relay and Video Relay Services.

If you have any questions please contact me at the above-listed number

Sincerely,

/s/ Larry Fenster

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
Telecommunications Relay Services and)	
Speech-to-Speech Services for)	CC Docket No. 98-67
Individuals with Hearing and Speech)	CG Docket No. 03-123
Disabilities)	

**ANNUAL REPORT ON WAIVED IP-RELAY AND VIDEO RELAY
SERVICES OFFERED BY MCI GLOBAL RELAY**

The Commission has waived several of its mandatory minimum telecommunications relay service (“TRS”) requirements for both Internet Protocol Relay (“IP-Relay”) and Video Relay Service (“VRS”) for five years from April 16, 2003. The Commission has also required providers of these services to file annual reports every April 16, discussing developments and/or progress made in the ability to offer the waived services. With regard to IP-Relay, the Commission waived the requirements to: 1) automatically transfer calls to emergency

services providers, including location information; 2) to provide voice services such as voice carry over service (“VCO”), speech-to-speech service (“STS”), and hearing carry over service (“HCO”) and combinations of these waived services, such as VCO-TTY, HCO-TTY, VCO-VCO, and HCO-HCO; 3) access to pay-per-call providers, 4) call release, 5) three way calling, 6) speed dialing requirements and 7) carrier of choice requirements.

With regard to VRS, the Commission has similarly waived the requirements to 1) automatically transfer calls to emergency services providers, including location information; 2) to provide voice services such as voice carry over service (“VCO”), and hearing carry over service (“HCO”) and combinations of these waived services, such as VCO-TTY, HCO-TTY, VCO-VCO, and HCO-HCO; 3) access to pay-per-call providers, 4) call release, 5) equal access to interexchange carriers; 6) speed dialing requirements, and 7) access to operator services and billing for long-distance service. MCI hereby submits its second annual report on the status of progress made towards the resolution of problems that formed the basis of the Commission’s waiver of the above-mentioned services.

I. IP Relay Waivers

A. Automatic Transfer Of Emergency Calls To PSAPs

The Commission waived the requirement to automatically transfer emergency calls to public service answer points (PSAPs) because the IP-Relay provider does not have the originating automatic numbering information (ANI) of the calling party, and therefore does not have the information needed to automatically identify the caller's location.¹ That still remains the case today. For this reason, MCI's IP-Relay.com website informs callers that they should use their TTY and telephone when contacting 911.

However if a caller requests emergency service from our IP-Relay operators we will ask the caller for their city and state and route them to the PSAP.² MCI is not aware of any existing methodology of accurately linking dynamically assigned IP addresses to a caller's originating ANI. MCI has developed a national database of current PSAP numbers and after making a brief inquiry regarding the caller's location, is able to immediately transfer an emergency call dialed

¹ *In the Matter of Provision of Improved Telecommunications Relay services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities, Declaratory Ruling and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, (IP-Relay Order), CC Docket No. 98-67, rel April 22, 2002, & 30.*

² MCI's IP-Relay communications assistants (CAs) handle approximately 60 emergency calls per month on average.

through IP-Relay to the appropriate PSAP. This still remains the most accurate method transferring an emergency call to the appropriate PSAP. An alternative, sometimes discussed, would require calling parties to register location information with the IP-Relay provider, which would then be transferred to the PSAP associated with the registered location information in the event the caller dialed 911 via IP-Relay.

However, MCI's experience is that the user community generally does not support mandatory registration, and voluntary registration would be intermittent at best. Moreover, because IP-Relay permits a calling party to make a relay call from any Internet-enabled device, from any location, it could very often turn out that incorrect location information would be on file at the relay center. Under these circumstances, querying the party who dials 911 via IP-Relay regarding his or her current location is still the most accurate and safest method of transferring such a call to the PSAP.

B. Ability To Provide VCO, STS, and HCO and Other Voice-based Services

The Commission waived the requirement to provide VCO, STS, HCO, and other voice-based services such as VCO-TTY, HCO-TTY, VCO-VCO, and HCO-HCO, finding that IP-Relay can only be accessed

as text service.³ While broadband connections have improved quality of voice transmission over the Internet, most households still do not subscribe to broadband Internet access service. Similarly, while computer sound cards have improved, the stock of sound cards in most computers is still insufficient to ensure a sufficiently clear communication. Moreover, quality of transmission and quality of user customer premise equipment continues to remain outside the control of IP-Relay providers. Uneven and erratic voice quality still remains a barrier sufficient to maintaining the waiver of the above-mentioned services.

Nevertheless, MCI has made progress in its ability to offer some of these above-mentioned services. If a user subscribes to conference calling and three-way calling service available from its local exchange carrier, we are able to provide two-line VCO and two-line HCO. In the former case, the relay operator will type the voice user's communication and caller may speak directly to the voice user. In the latter case, the relay operation will speak to the voice user and the call can listen to their response.

C. Pay-Per-Call Services

³ *IP-Relay Order*, & 32, *Reconsideration Order*, &18.

The Commission has waived the requirement for IP-Relay providers to offer access to pay-per-call services. The Commission determined that it was not technically feasible to provide this service.⁴ In particular, the Commission found that a 900 number call terminates to a recorded announcement that is not answered by a live attendant, making the provision of alternate billing impossible. MCI has recently made test calls and found that this is still the case today. Consequently, it is still technically infeasible to connect users to pay-per-call services given the absence of live pay-per-call billing operations. As with voice applications, this circumstance is outside the control of IP-Relay providers.

D. Call Release

Call release involves the ability of a relay center to connect a calling and called party and then remove the center from playing any intermediating role and allow the parties to directly communicate using their customer premise equipment (“CPE”). MCI is not aware of any technology or innovations that make it possible for CPE utilizing incompatible protocols to directly communicate were the relay center to remove itself from playing an intermediating role.

⁴ *Reconsideration Order*, & 22.

E. Three-way Calling

Three-way calling involves the ability of a person to make a conference call involving three people. The Commission has recently found that this call service requirement is met if a customer subscribes to this LEC service and relay providers do not interfere with the ability of this service to function.⁵ MCI's IP-Relay service does not interfere with the ability to use 3-way calling if they have subscribed to this LEC service.

F. Speed Dialing

Speed dialing involves manually storing a list of telephone numbers with designated speed dialing codes in the TRS user's consumer profile, and then allowing a calling party to request the relay operator to dial this code in order to speed dial. MCI Global Relay currently offers the IP-Relay equivalent of speed dialing. An IP-Relay customer establishes a profile of speed dial numbers that he or she may access from MCI's Global Relay web site. At that point, the calling party selects the speed dial number of choice and the call is automatically dialed through to the called party.

⁵ Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities, Order (*3-way Calling Order*), CC Docket No. 98-67, CG Docket No. 03-123, DA 05-447, rel. February 18, 2005.

G. Carrier of Choice

The Commission granted IP Relay providers an indefinite waiver of the equal access to interexchange carrier requirement so long as they offer this service without charge. MCI has never charged for its IP-Relay service and is in compliance with this requirement.

H. Other IP-Relay Innovations.

1. IP-Relay Voice

While, technical conditions remain essentially the same as when the Commission approved waivers for the above-mentioned, MCI's Global Relay has made additional innovations available to its customers in areas where has exercised greater control of technology. MCI has developed a service called "IP-Relay Voice." Customers may download and install software onto their computers that allows them to receive incoming relay calls, instant messages from other IP-Relay Voice users, as well as communicate with TTY users. Voice callers can reach a user of IP-Relay Voice, who is logged into the IP-Relay server, by calling a toll free number from anywhere in North America. In

addition, the service allows users of other text devices, including TTYs, to communicate via text with customers logged into IP-Relay Voice.⁶

2. Wireless IP-Relay

MCI also added “Wireless IP-Relay” to its menu of competitive relay services. IP-Relay users can now access the relay via the Danger, Inc Hiptop, and Sidekick. Customers who have a terminal client already installed on these devices simply download and install additional software and they are able to make a wireless IP-Relay call without charge.

3. My IP Relay on AIM

With My IP Relay, AIM users can use their AIM-enabled computer or wireless device to connect to MCI’s IP-RELAY.com services. To establish a call, AOL members, AIM users add the MCI Relay screen name, “My IP Relay,” to their Buddy List. When users click on the “My IP Relay” screen name and open a message window, they will be prompted to initiate an IP-RELAY.com call. Users simply

⁶ MCI does not include text-text communications in its request for reimbursement from either state or Interstate TRS Funds. See http://www.ip-relay.com/callback_features.htm for further description of calling features available using IP-Relay Voice.

type what they want to say into the message window and the relay operator facilitates the call.

4. My IP Relay Number

My IP Relay(sm) Number is the only IP Relay product that gives a person their own telephone number so hearing people can call them on their computer PC or wireless device without the need for 711 or relay 800. The voice caller simply dials a personal ten-digit number and is connected through a relay operator. The service also allows a user to link several AIM Screen Names to their My IP Relay Number. When voice callers dial this personal number, the call will find them, no matter which screen name is being used.⁷

II. Video Relay Service

A. Speed of Answer.

MCI recently began self-providing VRS, rather than rely on an outside vendor, and so is the newest VRS provider. The Commission has waived the requirement for video relay providers to answer calls within ten seconds, 85 percent of the time (“speed of answer requirement”). MCI is currently unable to meet this requirement. As

⁷ More information about My IP Relay on AIM and My IP Relay Number can be found at the following link: <http://www.ip-relay.com/myiprelay.htm>

MCI explained recently in its comment on VRS speed of answer requirements, the labor market for interpreters does not allow the speed of answer requirement to be met in a manner that would be affordable for the Interstate TRS Fund.

MCI will continue to monitor the market for interpreters and voluntarily increase its speed of answer availability of VRS throughout the day. If, as a result of the upcoming proceeding initiated by the California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Commission succeeds in making it possible for VRS users to choose their VRS provider without limitations placed on the use of their VRS equipment, users will choose the VRS provider that has the fastest speed of answer and longest hours of service.⁸ If market forces are given full reign, both speed of answer times and hours of availability will improve without further regulatory intervention.

B. Automatic Transfer Of Emergency Calls To PSAPs

As with IP-Relay discussed above, the Commission waived the requirement for VRS providers to automatically transfer emergency calls to public service answer points (PSAPs) because they do not have the originating automatic numbering information (ANI) of the calling

⁸ Cite upcoming interoperability proceeding.

party, and therefore do not have the information needed to automatically identify the caller's location. That still remains the case today. For this reason, MCI's Global Relay website (<http://ip-vrs.com/videorelay.jsp>) informs callers that they should use their TTY and telephone when contacting 911.

If a caller requests emergency service from our IP-VRS operators we will ask the caller for their city and state and route them to the PSAP. MCI is not aware of any existing methodology of accurately linking dynamically assigned IP addresses to a caller's originating ANI. MCI has developed a national database of current PSAP numbers and after making a brief inquiry regarding the caller's location, is able to immediately transfer an emergency call dialed through IP-Relay to the appropriate PSAP. This still remains the most accurate method transferring an emergency call to the appropriate PSAP.

C. Pay-Per-Call Services

The Commission has waived the requirement for IP-Relay providers to offer access to pay-per-call services. The Commission determined that it was not technically feasible to provide this service.⁹

⁹ *Reconsideration Order*, & 22.

Since VRS is an Internet-based service, as is IP-Relay, it faces the same limitations for all services that require the automatic delivery of a caller's originating ANI. In its *IP-Relay Reconsideration Order*, the Commission found that a 900 number call terminates to a recorded announcement that is not answered by a live attendant, making the provision of alternate billing impossible. It remains technically infeasible to connect users to pay-per-call services given the absence of live pay-per-call billing operations. As with voice applications, this circumstance is outside the control of VRS providers.

D. Call Release

Call release involves the ability of a relay center to connect a calling and called party with the same type of customer premise equipment ("CPE") and then remove the center from playing any intermediating role and allow the parties to directly communicate using their CPE. VRS users with compatible net-conferencing software are currently able to directly communicate. Otherwise, if a VRS user must first connect with a VRS center, as with IP-Relay, MCI is not aware of any technology or innovations that make it possible for VRS CPE utilizing incompatible protocols to directly communicate if

the relay center were to remove itself from playing an intermediating role.

E. Three-way Calling

Three-way calling involves the ability of a person to make a conference call involving three people. The Commission has recently found that this call service requirement is met if a customer subscribes to this LEC service and relay providers do not interfere with the ability of this service to function.¹⁰ MCI's IP-VRS service does not interfere with the ability to use 3-way calling if users have subscribed to this LEC service.

F. Speed Dialing

Speed dialing involves manually storing a list of telephone numbers with designated speed dialing codes in the TRS user's consumer profile, and then allowing a calling party to request the relay operator to dial this code in order to speed dial. MCI Global Relay currently offers the IP-VRS equivalent of speed dialing. An IP-VRS customer establishes a profile of speed dial numbers that he or she may access from MCI's Global Relay web site. At that point, the

¹⁰ Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities, Order (*3-way Calling Order*), CC Docket No. 98-67, CG Docket No. 03-123, DA 05-447, rel. February 18, 2005.

calling party selects the speed dial number of choice and the call is automatically dialed through to the called party.

G. Carrier Of Choice

The Commission granted VRS providers a waiver of the equal access to interexchange carrier requirement because the deaf to video interpreter leg of a VRS call is carried over the Internet and so the VRS provider will not be able to identify the consumer's chosen interexchange carrier. As with IP-Relay, the Commission has allowed VRS providers to refrain from offering carrier of choice so long as the service is provided free of charge. MCI IP-VRS does not charge users for this service, because as stated above, without automatic location information provided by originating ANI, MCI is unable to properly rate a call. The ability to automatically and accurately identify customer location information is a technical problem shared by all providers of IP-enabled services. MCI is unaware of any general technical solution to this problem.

H. Operator-assisted Calls

VRS providers are currently not required to handle operator assisted calls so long as they are provided free of charge.¹¹ As

¹¹ VRS Waiver Order, & 10.

discussed above, MCI IP-VRS does not charge users to complete any calls that may otherwise be billed as toll calls, including operator assisted calls. Until the IP-enabled industry develops technical solutions that allow for accurate identification of geographic location, MCI will be unable to bill for long-distance calls and will continue to offer its IP-VRS service free of charge.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the number listed below.

Respectfully Submitted

/s/ Larry Fenster

1133 19th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-736-6513

Thomas Chandler, Director, Disability Rights Office

Statement of Verification

I have read the foregoing, and to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, there is good ground to support it, and it is not interposed for delay. I verify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on April 16, 2005

/s/Larry Fenster
1133 19th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-736-6513